



## **FNLKC Conference Workshop Presenter**

**Workshop Title:** Language Revitalization through Hand Signing

**Name of Presenters:** JR McArthur & Michael Turcotte

**Biography:** JR (Robert) McArthur Jr. is Nakoda from Whitebear First Nation. In the past, he has worked as an independent contractor in oil field for 20 years. But, as language has always been a big part of his life, he now has chosen to pursue this passion full time. He hopes that Nakoda will be strong again one day.

**Biography:** Michael Turcotte is a full-time faculty member at Fort Peck Community College in Wolf Point, Montana on the Fort Peck Indian Reservation. As a youth hearing the Assiniboine language sporadically sparked an interest with Michael. He was fortunate to have received help from Robert Fourstar and Kenneth Ryan as his mentors along with many others. With his brother Roger White Jr., they have been teaching the language in the communities of Wolf Point and Frazer.

**Abstract:** Tens of thousands of First Nations people used universal hand talk that changed when the federal government instituted a policy designed to “civilize” tribal people. Hand talk users have dropped to a small number of hearing challenged people of the Plains Indian cultures. This presentation and workshop will provide an overview of the Plains Indian Sign Language in relation to the Nakoda people and give examples of lessons plans that incorporate sign language and also means of assessments.

### **Learning Outcomes:**

By the end of this workshop, delegates will:

- Be provided the "Sign Language for Schools" booklet created by Fort Peck Community College and a bibliography of relevant material pertaining to sign-language